

LEGISLATURE HEARING BILLS AFTER DEADLINE

Next week many Senate policy committees (and three Assembly committees) will be hearing bills introduced in their own house after today's deadline. In some cases, bills will be heard that have yet to get the required rule waiver to hear bills after the deadline. **May 24** is the next key deadline, the last day for fiscal committees to hear and report to the Floor bills introduced in their house. **May 31** is the last day for bills to be passed out of their house of origin.

BION GREGORY JOINS LAW FIRM

Bion Gregory, who recently served as the Legislature's Legislative Counsel for over a quarter of a century, has joined the Sacramento office of Nossaman Guthner Knox and Elliot. Gregory will not be a lobbyist for the firm but, according to the Daily Journal "he intends to court clients for the firm's infrastructure, health care, land use and complex litigation practices."

The Legislature is in no rush to appoint a new Legislative Counsel. Diane Boyer-Vine, a Chief Deputy Legislative Counsel, is the acting Legislative Counsel.

GOVERNOR SIGNS TAX CONFORMITY BILLS

On Wednesday, Governor Davis signed two identical bills that allow Californians to contribute more money to their tax deferred retirement accounts without paying more in state taxes. [AB 1122](#) ([Ellen Corbett](#), D - San Leandro) and [SB 657](#) (Jack Scott, D - Pasadena) bring state tax law into conformity with changes made in federal law - the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001. The new tax law is operative January 1, 2002, and therefore will apply to contributions made this year.

MAJOR CHANGES IN COUNTY LAW LIBRARY BILL

Faced with strong opposition from a number of quarters, Assembly Member [Mark Wyland](#) has taken substantial amendments to his [AB 2648](#), which would have eliminated the 111-year-old requirement that counties provide quarters for county law libraries and instead required that those quarters be funded through surcharges on civil filing fees. In addition, Wyland has agreed to work further with the county law librarians to produce a mutually acceptable measure. With those amendments and that commitment,

the bill was approved by the Assembly Local Government Committee last week on a 10-0 vote.

The amendments convert AB 2648 to an oversight and accountability measure, specifying that a county may review any claims, expenses, or requests for reimbursement received for the costs and maintenance of law library facilities in order to determine whether the costs are necessary. Both sides commit that further negotiations will produce a bill similar in objective, but less subject to possible misinterpretation.

The earlier version of AB 2648 was opposed by county law librarians, local bar associations, and others in the legal community, including the State Bar's Board of Governors, because of its potential negative impact on the access of private citizens - the primary users of county law libraries - to necessary legal information. The state Judicial Council, which has demonstrated its commitment to increasing access to legal information and services for all Californians through the creation of a ["Self-Help" Center](#) on its web site and other initiatives, also expressed an interest in the bill for similar reasons.

COURT ORDERS: JUDGES' NOTATIONS

The Assembly Judiciary Committee has approved [AB 2865](#) ([Koretz](#)), a measure co-sponsored by the Beverly Hills Bar Association and the State Bar, which would authorize a trial court judge to note, at his or her discretion, that resolution of a matter may be expedited by appellate determination of a legal issue. The notation would not be binding on the appellate court.

Inspired by a resolution adopted by the Conference of Delegates, the committee's unanimous approval of AB 2865 was the culmination of weeks of labor intensive drafting and redrafting of the bill's provisions involving the Consumer Attorneys of California (CAOC) and the Judicial Council. Both opposed the initial measure, which would have established a process for interlocutory appeals. The CAOC asserted that the bill would result in costly and unnecessary delays. The Judicial Council took the position that there was no need for the measure.

Supporters of the compromise bill see it as providing guidance to the parties and reviewing courts. The bill would not create a new mechanism for appellate review and would be initiated upon receipt of a written request of a party or counsel.